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and which I do not feel exactly like dividing with everybody, I should certainly be tempted to advocate Fourierism, Socialism, or any other ism of the day.

"When my opinion is asked upon a work of Art, I roll up my eyes, fold my hands, and say, with emphasis, 'I admire it very much.' It is true a great many execrable things are perpetrated, and brought to my notice by my friends; but then I may some day commit an indiscretion myself, which may be brought to the notice of somebody else's friends. And they may ask Mr. Somebody-Else what he thinks about it, and I then expect him to roll up his eyes as aforesaid, fold his hands ditto, and exclaim, 'I admire it very much!' Why, I ask you, gentlemen, should I not do unto others as I wish to be done by; and why, gentlemen, please, should you not do the same thing?"

"Oh, what an Elysium on earth it would be, if artists and critics could live alongside of each other like brethren, and love each other, and praise each other's works, to the advancement of the profession! The public, instead of receiving aid and comfort from our ranks, in their efforts to grind us down, and keep us in a perpetual state of poverty, would have to submit to our terms; and the artist, instead of being proverbially poor, would live in affluence and plenty. Nor would the artist need to labor and toil for his riches; it would simply rest with him to decide how much he is willing to do for a liberal competence. And you, gentlemen, I mean you critics, if you happen not to be in the ranks of the artists yourselves, would you not share this comfortable state of things, and receive liberal fees for the praises you sing, while you are now starving on the pittance paid you by the publisher?"

"As a living example of the truth of my assertions, please to look at the unprecedented success of The 'People's Advocate,' a paper, to speak charitably, filled with doubtful literature, and yet by means of judicious and liberal advertising and puffing, it is a source of wealth to the editor and to the generous critic. Why can't the same state of things be brought about in painting, literature, and architecture?"

"That you may know that I have canvassed the matter thoroughly, I will answer the question myself as you would answer it. You say you revere the truth, and desire to advance the Art, by showing what is really meritorious and what not, in order that artists may improve and the public may discriminate; and you finally wind up by asserting that, although I avowedly admire everything, I still have a sliver of bringing the faults of others to the knowledge of those I am dealing with; and you also maintain that whenever anybody among you happens to be unjustly severe upon a work of Art, that there is an opportunity afforded to repel the attack, and force it back upon your own heads, by an exposition of the truth. Now, all that sounds very well in theory, but does not work well in practice. As to truth in Art, I do not believe there is such a thing in existence. I think it all fancy—a simple matter of taste, and we all know there is no accounting for tastes.

"What is the use in advancing Art, when it is already in advance of its market price. The public is not required to discriminate; it is rather desirable that each artist should be exclusively admired in the circle of his friends and patrons. As to my slily insinuation, gentlemen, I intend to shame you by the candid confession that I have a way peculiarly my own of throwing a little mist round the works of others; I do not confine myself, however, to those which are really faulty, but extend it to all rival works. I consider this, however, an innocent trick of the trade, and as long as it is done privately and with decorum, I can see no harm in it; but I would not for the world publish openly anything but approval and admiration.

"Your last point, gentlemen, is the least tenable of all; you expect your victims to reply to your attacks, if they should prove unjust; but you know very well that those who are thus attacked are very rarely able to reply; they are weak artists, who ought to be helped along by judicious praise rather than crushed by severe criticism.

"This, gentlemen, is the way in which I would answer you, and I hope you will give all consideration to the opinion of

"Your humble friend,
"URIAH REEP."

Notes and Queries.

LONGEVITY OF ARTISTS.—I happened to be looking over a chronological list of modern painters, which Gray, the poet, made for his own convenience while in Italy, when I was struck by a preponderance of large figures in the column giving their ages and death, and was accordingly induced to find the average. The list opens with the reviver of painting, Cimabue, and comes down to almost 1700, a space of 400 years, embracing (beside a few whose ages were not known) 213 names, with an aggregate of 13,107 years, or an average of 61½ years.

I next looked over the list of "Eminent Sculptors, Painters, Architects and Engravers," given in *The World's Progress* (published by Putnam), which (omitting the ancients) chronologically begins at the same date, but comes down to about the middle of the present century with 231 names, and, making an aggregate of ages, found it 14,764 years, or an average of nearly 64 years.

Both these results show a very high average, placing the profession of an artist much above all others, we think. Can any of the CRAYON's readers, help us to an actual comparison?

In Griswold's *Poets of America*, the average age of those who have died, is not quite 47 years. W.

Letter from GEORGE WASHINGTON P. CUSTIS to REMBRANDT PEALE.

ARLINGTON HOUSE, August, 1857.

DEAR SIR:—Yours of the 6th inst. came duly to hand. It is a most gratifying event for me to receive a letter from an Octogenarian. It calls up the recollections of other days—the fond endearing memories of the past! Indeed, my dear sir, I am myself no chicken, having entered on my 77th year.

Honor to the memory of the Soldier Artist,* who hung up his palette in spring, girded on his sword, and fought a campaign in the War of Independence—then resumed his palette, and painted the portraits of the general officers; and without whose artistic labors we should not have had the likeness of the illustrious soldier (Greene), who was second only to him who was first of all.

The provincial Colonel of 1772, is in fine preservation, and always admired. I have the first and last of the distinguished and reliable portraits of Washington, at Arlington House, twenty-four years interval between them—Peale and Sharpless. Wishing you every success in your artistic labors, which it appears suffer no decline from your venerable age, I remain, dear sir,

Very truly and faithfully, yours,

GEO. W. P. CUSTIS.

NORTHOTE states that Sir Joshua Reynolds was a great admirer of "Mudge's Sermons," and that he intended to have republished them with a preface and a life of the author by himself. Mudge's Sermons are little known, and as Sir Joshua Reynolds's opinions are of interest, can any of your readers give any information concerning them? G.

Just as the intellectual Conscience tells us what is True, and as the Moral one is engraven with the principles of Goodness or Virtue, so the æsthetic Conscience is constituted of the principles of Beauty, and by those principles moulds the forms which, through the medium of the Imagination, are presented to the mental eye.—*Blackwood's Magazine*.

* Charles W. Peale.